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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the relation between the friendship networks of parents and the peer networks of their children. Subjects were 255 second- through fifth-grade children of an inner-city primary school in the western part of Berlin, Germany, who were interviewed about friends. In the interview, children were asked to name other children with whom they shared activities outside school. In the second phase of data collection, a subsample, composed of the parents of 116 children, were interviewed separately at home about their social networks. Analysis revealed that the number of mothers' and fathers' leisure-time friends was positively related to the number of the children's peer relationships with non-classmates, but not with classmates. In the case of fathers, the relation was similar for sons and daughters. For mothers, the relation depended on their employment status: for mothers employed full time, the number of leisure-time friends correlated positively with the number of peer relationships of girls, but negatively with the number of peer relationships of boys. For mothers who were not employed full time, the number of leisure-time friends was positively related to their sons' and daughters' peer relationships with non-classmates. (Contains 13 references, 2 figures, and 8 tables.) (MM)

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PARENTAL SOCIAL NETWORK

AND

CHILD'S FRIENDSHIP NETWORK

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PARENTAL SOCIAL NETWORK AND CHILD'S FRIENDSHIP NETWORK

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1. The problem

The data analyzed in this paper were collected as part of a broader study, in which we investigate direct and indirect influences of parents on the social integration of children into the world of peers in middle childhood. One pathway of influence leads from the social networks of parents to the peer networks of children as proposed by Ladd (1991). The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relations between characteristics of friendship networks of fathers and mothers and the size of children's peer networks. In their pioneering article Cochran and Brassard (1979) proposed several routes in which parental networks influence parents (access to assistance, provision of child-rearing controls and availability of role models) and children (cognitive and social stimulation, direct support, observational models, provision of opportunities.)

We collected data on both, fathers' and mothers' networks because they may influence children's integration in different ways (Oliveri & Reiss 1987). We restrict the analysis to the friendship networks of parents because they are of the same nature as the peer networks of children but separated from them, whereas kinship networks are different in nature and parents' and children's kinship networks overlap (Cochran & Davila 1992), mothers often being sort of "kinkeepers" (Oliveri & Reiss 1987).

There are only a few studies devoted to the question of parental network's influences on children's peer relationships (see Cochran & Davila 1992 for reviews). Tietjen (1985) studied similarities between mothers' and children's networks in Sweden. The size of mothers' and children's networks was not related, but other characteristics were. Tietjen found more similarity in mother-daughter than in mother-son dyads. Family structure (single vs. married mothers) had a moderating effect.

Oliveri and Reiss (1987) compared network characteristics of fathers and mothers with the networks of their adolescent children. Again, the size of parents' and children's networks was not similar but other characteristics like density, direct contact, help, and positive sentiments were. There are some indications in the data of Olivieri & Reiss

(1987) that mothers' and daughters' networks were more similar than mothers' and sons', and that these gender differences did not occur to the same extent in father-adolescent dyads.

The study of Australian children and their parents conducted by Homel et al. (1987) is the only one which found a relationship between the number of parents' friendships and the size of children's networks (p. 165). However, they did not analyze fathers' and mothers' networks separately, and the variable "size of networks" was not based on nominations of network partners as in our own study and in the studies of Tietjen (1985) and Oliveri & Reiss (1987), but on the global estimations of the respondents. This is a doubtful procedure since Baumann et al. (1987) found that networks based on nominations were generally smaller in size than networks based on global estimations.

Tietjen (1985) draws our attention to the employment status of mothers. She reported that "mothers who spent more time at jobs away from home had children who listed fewer friends", but she did not report data which give evidence for the moderating effect of mothers' employment on the relation between their networks and their children's networks. Belle's (in press) study apparently contradicts Tietjen's result because she showed that children of employed mothers got more support from peer relationships than children of not employed mothers (e.g. Belle, in press). Therefore, we included the maternal employment variable in the analysis of the influence of mothers' networks on children's peer relationships.

The moderating effect of parents' education on the influence of their networks on children's networks was not studied in the research cited above. However, because parents' education had effects on children's networks (e.g. Cochran and Riley, 1990) as well as on parents' own networks (e.g. Fischer, 1982), we also added parents' education as moderating variable to the analyses.

The central question of this paper refers to the relation between the size of fathers' and mothers' networks and the size of children's peer networks. Because of the negative results of Tietjen (1985) and Oliveri & Reiss (1987) we will compare not only the total size of networks like Homel et al. (1987), but also the size of subsystems of the networks. On the side of parents we differentiate between the number of friends with which they spend leisure time and the number of friends with which they do not spend leisure time. Another differentiation of the whole networks refers to the number of friends from which they get emotional and informational support, and the number of friends from which they do not get such support. A third partition of the networks

refers to the number of friends with which they discuss child rearing problems and from which they get advice with regard to child rearing, and the number of friends with which they do not discuss child rearing problems and from which they do not get advice with regard to child rearing (see Cochran & Brassard 1979 for the relevance of these aspects). On the side of children we differentiate networks of classmates and non-classmates because these two kinds of peers serve different purposes (Krappmann, Oswald, Weiss, Uhlendorff, 1993).

We then will examine the gender differences. Do the networks of fathers and mothers differently influence children's peer relationships and do they differently influence the relationships of girls and boys as demonstrated in the Oliveri & Reiss (1987) study about adolescents? Is there a tendency to choose the same-sex parent as role model? Are gender effects of this kind moderated by mothers' and fathers' education, by the family structure, and by the maternal employment status?

2. Method

2.1 Procedure and sample

In the first phase of data collection, an interview about friends was administered to the students of an inner-city primary school located in the western part of Berlin, Germany, in 1991. Twelve classrooms from grade 2 to grade 5 participated in the study (one classroom from another school situated nearby because of administrative reasons). Since only 24 of the 279 children attending these classrooms refused the interview, the sample consists of almost the entire child population of these age groups living in the neighborhood of the school. The 255 interviewed children - 55% boys and 45% girls - form an almost unselected sample that can be regarded as fairly representative for normal inner-city school districts whose inhabitants can be assigned to the middle-middle, lower-middle and upper-lower class. Members of the middle classes are slightly overrepresented.

In the second phase of data collection, fathers and mothers of a subsample of 116 children were interviewed separately at home about their social networks. The subsample of children comprised 56% boys and 44% girls, the age ranged from 7;5 to 12;2 years (24% second-graders, 25% third-graders, 22% fourth-graders and 28% fifth-graders). Sixty-nine percent of the children lived with two parents, 29% with mothers, and 2% with fathers.

Due to siblings in the sample of children (N = 21), single-parent families (N = 35), and refused interviews by one parent in two-parent families (N = 4) the interviews were conducted with 103 mothers and 68 fathers. The age of mothers ranged from 25 to 51 years (X = 37), the age of fathers ranged from 29 to 60 years (X = 40). Twenty-two percent of the mothers were not employed, 43 percent worked part time and 35 percent worked full time. Thirty-six percent of the mothers and 50 percent of the fathers achieved the highest German school degree (Abitur) which gives them the admission to study at a university, 64 percent of mothers and 50 percent of fathers achieved a lower degree (Realschul- or Hauptschulabschluß).

The subsample of 116 children did not significantly differ from the total sample of 255 children with respect to age, grade, sex, and important characteristics of the children's friendship networks (number of nominated children inside and outside the classroom), and the structure of their family (two-parent versus single-parent families).

2.2 Measures

Children's social integration in the world of peers was investigated by using a standardized ***interview about friends*** (Krappmann, Oswald, von Salisch, Schuster, Uhlendorff, Weiss, 1991). The children were extensively asked to name other children with which they share activities outside school at different places and at different times, e.g. at the playground, at home, in the garden or in the yard, in specific groups, e.g. at sports, in the afternoon, at the weekend or during vacations. Classmates who only had contact at school with the interviewed children were not defined as friends[1], because nearly all children lived very close to the school and a relationship of some importance should result in at least occasionally joined activities outside the school.

The 116 children of the subsample nominated 1018 relationships. Almost one half of the nominated children were non-classmates. In the mean each child nominated 8,8 children, 4,4 inside the classroom and 4,3 outside the classroom (see fig. 1). The integration in the world of peers inside and outside the school was different. The number of peer relationships with classmates and the number of peer relationships with non-classmates correlated marginally in the large sample indicating a dissimiliar extent of social integration concerning classmates and non-classmates. Therefore, the total

1 Instruction time at school is restricted to the time before lunch. The schools have no cafeteria. Most children leave school to have lunch at home, a minority has lunch in day care centers. Therefore, children have plenty of time to socialize outside the school.

number of peer relationships according to the above definition as well as the number of peer relationships with classmates and with non-classmates were the dependent variables for the analyses of this paper.

Data about the social networks of parents were collected by a ***social network interview*** (based on an instrument developed by Parke). Mothers and fathers were separately asked to nominate persons, "who provide friendship and support for them". Husbands should not be included. The relationship to each nominated person had to be described according to six characteristics: (1) spending leisure time together, (2) getting information and advice, (3) dicussing very personal matters, (4) talking about children, (5) getting advice about children, and (6) being influenced with regard to child rearing behavior (see fig. 1). In addition, each nominated person had to be assigned to categories like relative, neighbor, colleague, friend. The following analyses were based on the relationships with "friends" only.

The 103 mothers and 68 fathers of the interviewed children nominated 4,7 resp. 3,8 friends (see fig. 1). Mothers had significantly more friends with which they spend leisure time than fathers ($t = 2,19$; $p < .05$). Similar results were found for friends from which they get information and advice ($t = 2,31$; $p < .05$), for friends with which they discuss personal matters ($t = 2,11$; $p < .05$), with which they talk about children ($t = 2,08$; $p > .05$), and for friends from which they get advice concerning children ($t = 2,32$; $p < .05$), whereas the total number of mothers' and fathers' friends did not significantly differ ($t = 1,43$; $p =$ n.s.). These total numbers of persons rated as friends by mothers or fathers were the first two independent variables.

Additional independent variables were formed by using the six characteristics of friendships. Most of parent's friendships were characterized by spending leisure time together, getting information and advice, discussing personal matters, and talking about children, whereas fewer friendships were characterized by getting advice with regard to child rearing and being influenced with regard to child rearing behaviors (see fig. 1).

A confirmatory factor analysis computed with the characteristics of all nominated friends of both parents (see fig. 2) supported the presumption that the single variable "***spending leisure time together***" was one dimension of parental friendships. The variables "getting information and advice" and "discussing personal matters" constituted a second dimension which was labeled as "***general supportive discussions***". A third dimension, "***supportive discussions about children***", was formed by the variables

"talking about children", "getting advice concerning children" and "being influenced concerning child-rearing behavior".[2]

The single variable constituting the first dimension was used to form four independent variables (two for mothers and two for fathers):

- Number of friends with which she/he spends leisure time ('often' and 'sometimes')

- Number of friends with which she/he does *not* spend leisure time ('seldom' and 'never')

The two variables constituting the second dimension were correlated (mothers: $r = .47$; $p < .01$; fathers: $r = .40$; $p > .01$). Therefore, we combined them to a scale "general supportive discussions" which was divided at the mean to form four further independent variables (two for mothers and two for fathers):

- Number of friends with which she/he has supportive discussions (above the mean)

- Number of friends with which she/he does *not* have supportive discussions (below the mean)

The three variables constituting the third dimension were combined to a scale "supportive discussions about children" (mothers: alpha =.76; fathers: alpha = .75). Again, the scale was devided at the mean to form four variables (two for mothers and two for fathers):

- Number of friends with which she/he has supportive discussions about children (above the mean)

- Number of friends with which she/he does *not* have supportive discussions about children (below the mean).

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2 The results of the confirmatory factor analysis may be biased by the dominance of parents who nominated many friendships. For this reason the confirmatory factor analysis was repeated with a file of half the friendships (N=375) which were described by parents who nominated only up to six friendships. The result concerning the three dimensions again was confirmed (goodness of fit index = .995; adjusted goodness of fit index = .984; root mean square residual = .034). Factor analyses calculated for friends of fathers and mothers separately confirmed the three dimensions of friendships as well.

Additional independent variables used in the analyses were mothers' and fathers' education, family structure (single-mother vs. two-parent families), and mothers' employment (full time, part time, not employed).

To investigate the influences of mothers' and fathers' friendship networks on childrens' peer relationships we used two different data sets: The first contained 113 mother-child dyads, the second 78 father-child dyads[3].

3. Results

3.1 The relation between characteristics of mothers' friendship networks and girls' and boys' peer relationships

The total number of mothers' friends was related to the total number of peer relationships of the children (see table 2). However, on the side of mothers this result held only for the number of mothers' leisure-time friends (friends mothers spent leisure time with) and not for other friends. On the side of children, it held only for peer relationships outside the classroom and not for peer relationships inside the classroom.

The number of mothers' supportive friendships, according to two measures (friends with which mothers had general supportive discussions and supportive discussions about children), ***was not*** related to the number of children's peer relationships, whereas the number of mothers' ***non-supportive*** friends was related to the number of children's peer relationships. The hypothesis that the size of mothers' supportive friendship networks is predictive for children's peer integration could not be confirmed. On the contrary, only the size of mothers' non-supportive friendship networks predicted children's peer integration. Again, these relationships were only true with respect to children's integration outside the classroom. We did not find any relations between characteristics of mothers' friendship networks and the number of childrens' relationships with classmates.

A multiple regression analysis with the number of mothers' leisure-time friends, the number of mothers' non-leisure-time friends, mothers' education, family structure, and mothers' employment as predictor variables and the number of children's peer

3 The number of dyads is higher than the number of respondents because the children sample contains siblings.

relationships with non-classmates as the criterion variable confirmed that the size of the leisure-time-friend networks and not the size of networks of the other friends affected children's peer integration outside the classroom. In addition, the children of employed mothers had more peer relationships with non-classmates than children of not employed mothers. Mothers' education and the family structure had no effects[4], the latter in contrast to the bivariate correlation between family structure and the number of children's peer relationships outside the classroom ($r = .17$, $p < .05$).

Is this result concerning the influence of the number of mothers' leisure-time friends true for girls and boys?

The number of mothers' leisure-time friends affected only daughters' and not sons' peer integration outside the classroom ($r = .44$, $p < .01$; $r = -.00$, p = n.s.) (see table 3). The difference between mother-daughter and mother-son dyads is significant according to a multiple regression equation. We calculated a multiple regression of the number of children's peer relationships with non-classmates on the number of mother's leisure-time friends, sex of the child and on an interaction term combining the number of mothers' leisure-time friends with the sex of the child (see table 4). The interaction term had a significant effect indicating that the influence of mothers' networks on daughters' and sons' peer integration was different. In the case of boys, the influence was zero. In the case of girls, the influence was medium and significant[5]. The number of mothers' leisure-time friends affected only the peer integration of girls and not of boys. This gender effect was independent of mothers' education and could be found in single-parent families as well as in two-parent families.

However, the distinct influences of mothers' networks on girls and boys were further specified when we included mothers' employment in the analysis (see table 5). If mothers were full time employed, the influence of the number of their leisure-time friends on boys' peer integration outside the classroom was negative ($r = -.42$, $p < .05$). If mothers were not full time employed, the influence on boys' peer integration was positive ($r = .44$, $p < .01$) as it was for girls. A multiple regression analysis for the subsample of boys including an interaction term combining mothers' employment with the size of their leisure-time-friend networks revealed that the difference between the social integration of boys of full time employed and not full time employed mothers

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4 Multiple regression of the number of peer relationships with non-classmates on the number of friends of mothers with which they spent leisure time (Beta = .30, $t < .01$), on the number of friends with which they did not spend leisure time (Beta = -.08, t = n.s.), mothers' education (Beta = -.03, t = n.s.), family structure (one or two parent household) (Beta = .12, t = n.s.), and mothers' employment status (Beta = -.21; $t > .05$) ; R square =. 17; F = 4,06; sign. $F < .05$.; N = 105.

5 See Jaquard et al., 1990, for details of the procedure and interpretation.

was significant (see table 6). The same difference was not found for girls. That means that the differential influence of mothers' leisure-time-friend networks on boys and girls reported above (table 3) did not hold if mothers did not work full time. Such mothers' networks influenced the peer integration of girls and boys in the same direction to almost the same extent. In contrast, the gender difference was even greater in the case of full time working mothers. The size of their networks of leisure-time friends had a significant positive effect on girls' but a significant negative effect on boys' peer integration outside the classroom.

3.2 The relation between characteristics of fathers' friendship networks and girls' and boys' peer relationships

The overall picture for the influence of fathers' networks on children's peer integration is not as clear as it was for mothers. Table 7 shows the correlations between characteristics of fathers' friendship networks and children's peer relationships. As in the case of mothers, the number of fathers' leisure-time friends in contrast to the number of other friends correlated with the total number of children's peer relationships. Again, this result held only with respect to non-classmates. Although the size of fathers' leisure-time-friend networks was important for children's integration outside the classroom, it did not affect children's relationships to classmates. Multiple regression analyses containing the number of fathers' leisure-time friends, the number of fathers' other friends and fathers' education as predictor variables confirmed the importance of fathers' leisure-time friends for children's peer integration outside the classroom.[6] The size of father's non-leisure-time-friend networks and their education did not predict children's peer relationships.

While the influence of fathers' and mothers' ***leisure-time-friend networks*** on children's peer integration was very similar, the same similarity did not occur with respect to supportive friends and it did not occur with respect to the differential effects on girls and boys.

In the case of mothers, children's number of peer relationships with non-classmates was similar with the number of ***non-supportive*** but not with the number of supportive friends. In contrast, the number of fathers' ***supportive*** friends (friends with which

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6 Multiple regression of the number of peer relationships with non-classmates on the number of fathers' friends with which they spent leisure time (Beta = .30, t <.05), the number of friends with which they did not spend leisure time (Beta = -.10, t = n.s.), fathers' education (Beta = -.06, t = n.s.); R square =. 08; F = 2.08; sign. F =.11.

fathers had general supportive discussions or supportive discussions about children) was positively related to the number of children's peer relationships, but the number of non-supportive friends was *not* related or even negatively related to children's peer integration (see table 7). In the case of fathers' supportive friends, the differences obtained hitherto between children's relationships inside and outside the classroom could not be found.

The size of mothers' leisure-time-friend networks affected only the peer integration of girls and not of boys, whereas the size of fathers' leisure-time-friend networks affected the peer integration of girls and boys in a similar way (see table 8). The difference of the correlation coefficients for father-daughter and father-son dyads did not differ significantly according to a multiple regression analysis. The interaction term combining the sex of the child with the size of fathers' leisure-time-friend networks had no significant effect on children's peer integration as it had in the case of mothers. The inclusion of fathers' education in the analyses did not change this overall picture.

Because nearly all fathers were full time employed the specifying analysis conducted for the employment status of mothers cannot be repeated for fathers.

4. Summary and discussion

Before summarizing the results one reservation has to be made. The theoretical assumption behind the above analyses is that characteristics of parents' networks influence children's networks. However, because of the cross-sectional character of our data and the correlational nature of regression analyses the causal interpretation may be premature.

In this paper, we conducted two kinds of gender comparisons. Firstly, we compared mothers and fathers, secondly, we compared parents' network influences on daughters and sons.

The first result was very similar for mothers and fathers. The number of mothers' and fathers' leisure-time friends was related to the number of children's peer relationships outside the classroom, but not inside the classroom. Parents with many leisure-time friends may stimulate and help their children to socialize outside school. Parents with few or no leisure-time friends may hamper the socializing efforts of their offspring. The possibilities of parents to influence the peer group behavior of their children at

school may be of smaller significance. In the classroom the children are more independent of parents.

The second result is different for mothers and fathers. The number of mothers' non-supportive friends (and not the number of supportive friends) was related to the number of children's peer relationships. The influence was again restricted to relationships outside the classroom. We speculate that it may be important for mothers' satisfaction to have a circle of friends for non-problematic leisure activities outside the realm of their children. Such content mothers may be more able to give room for their children's peer activities than mothers who do not have such distracting circles. In contrast, the influence of supportive friends may work in both directions depending for example on the kind of advice or relief the mothers get out of these relationships. This may obscure effects in a correlational analysis.

The pattern for fathers was the reverse. The number of supportive friends was positively related to the number of children's peer relationships, the number of non-supportive friends was not related or even negatively related. In addition, the correlations did not consistently differ for children's relationships with classmates and with non-classmates as they did in the case of mothers.

The third result refers to a difference of girls and boys and was again different for mothers and fathers. The size of mothers' leisure-time-friend networks was related to the number of peer relationships with non-classmates only for girls, but not for boys. It seems that mothers' good or poor integration into friendship networks influence only the good or poor peer integration of girls. Mothers with many leisure-time friends may help their daughters by advice and direct assistance or they may serve as models for the daughters' socializing behavior. Mothers with few or no leisure-time friends may be unable to help their daughters or serve as negative models.

However, the result concerning boys has to be specified. If mothers were not full time employed the size of their leisure-time-friend networks was related to the number of boys' peer relationships in the same way as it was for girls. The networks of mothers who spent more time at home had a similar influence on boys as on girls. In contrast, the size of leisure-time-friend networks of full time employed mothers was negatively related to boys' and positively related to girls' peer relationships outside the classroom. However, the impact of the leisure-time-friend networks of the fathers on boys' and girls' peer integration was very similar: The more leisure-time friends the fathers had, the more peer relationships with non-classmates the boys and girls had.

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FIGURE 1

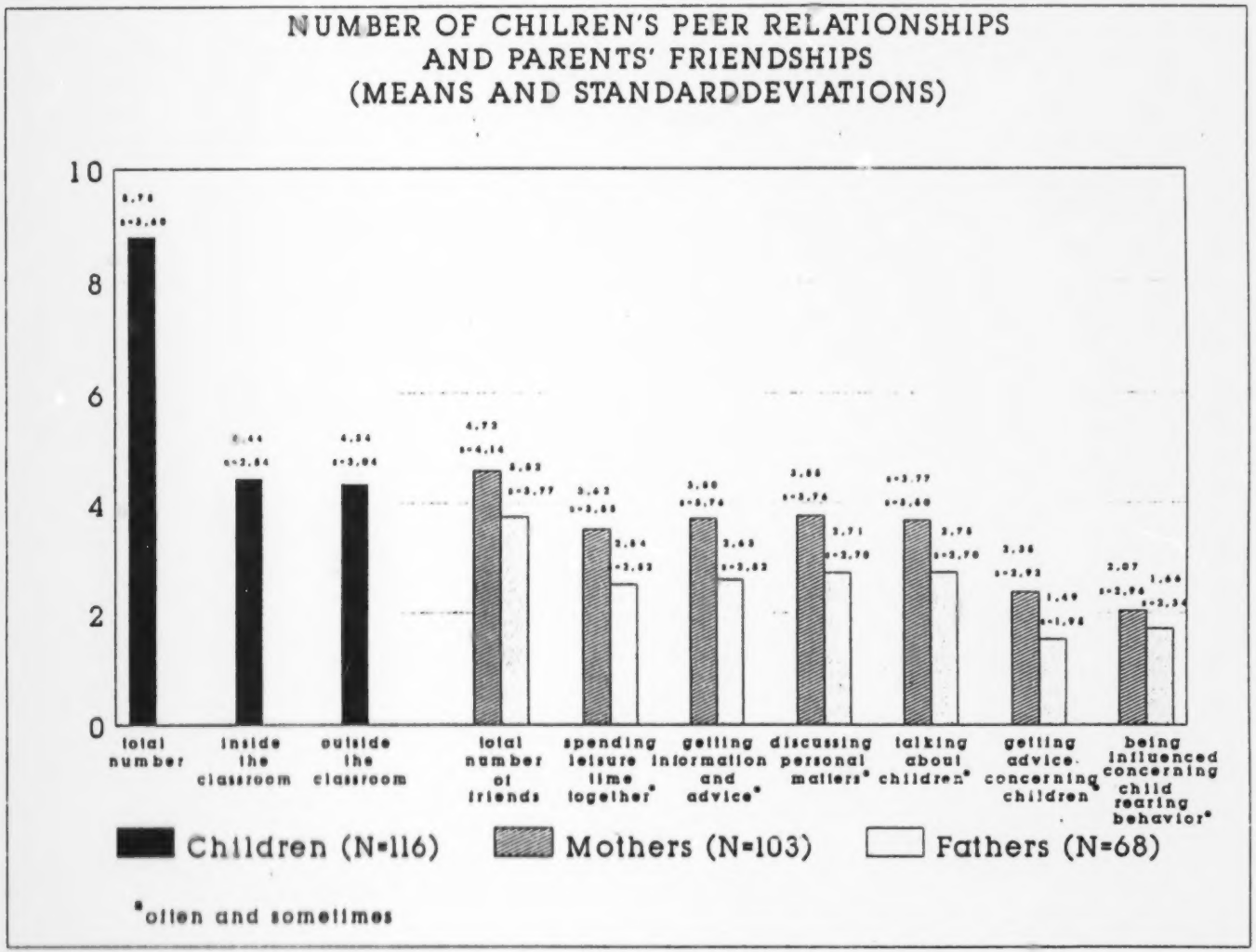

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FIGURE 2

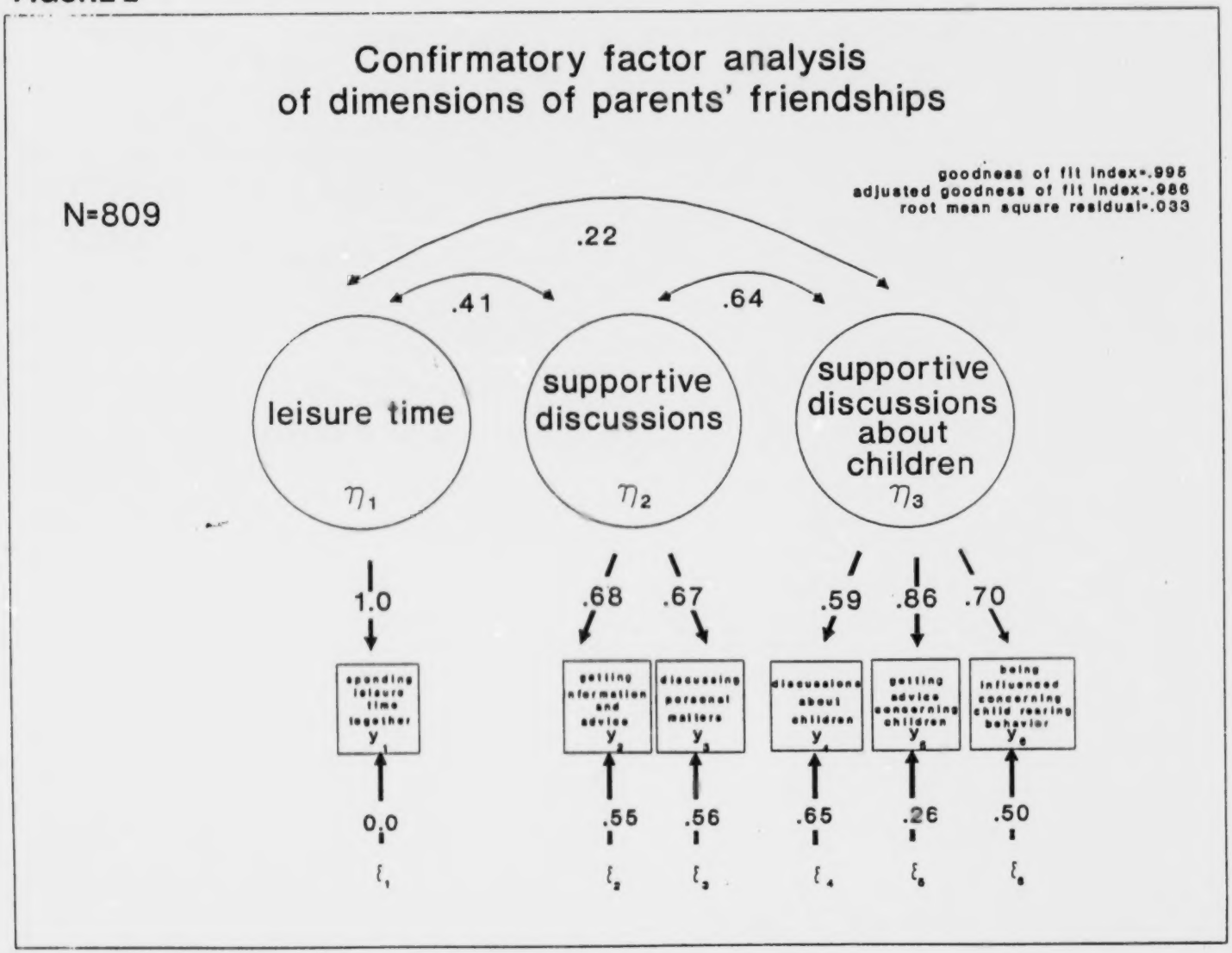

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TABLE 1

METHOD

1. Subjects

1.1 Children (N = 116)

girls 44 % (N = 51)
boys 56 % (N = 65)

age range from 7;5 to 12;2 years,
mean age: 9,11 years

second grade	24 %
third grade	25 %
fourth grade	22 %
fifth grade	28 %

1.2 Parents (N = 171)

mothers 60 % (N = 103)
fathers 40 % (N = 68)

age range of mothers from 25 to 51 years,
mean age: 37 years

age range of fathers from 29 to 60 years,
mean age: 40 years

Education:

	mothers	fathers
high (Abitur)	36 %	50 %
lower (not Abitur)	64 %	50 %

Employment of mothers:

full time	35 %
part time	43 %
not employed	21 %

two parent households	67 %
one parent households headed by mothers	32 %
one parent households headed by fathers	1 %

2. Measures

2.1 Dependent measures
- number of child's peer relationships
- number of child's peer relationships with classmates
- number of child's peer relationships with non-classmates

2.2 Independent measures
The following independent measures were build separately for mothers and fathers:

- number of friends she/he spends leisure time with
- number of friends she/he does not spend leisure time with

- number of friends she/he has supportive discussions with
- number of friends she/he does not have supportive discussions with

- number of friends she/he has supportive discussions about children with
- number of friends she/he does not have supportive discussions about children with

TABLE 2

Correlations between the number of mothers' friendships with different characteristics and the number of child's peer relationships (Pearson's r) for 113 mother-child dyads

			Child		
Mother	x	s	total number of peers	number of non-classmates	number of classmates
total number of friends	4,58	4,04	.19*	.20*	.03
number of friends she spends leisure time with[1]	3,51	3,47	.23**	.25**	.03
number of friends she does not spend leisure time with[2]	1,06	1,56	-.01	-.02	.01
number of friends she has supportive discussions with[3]	2,97	3,37	.07	.11	-.03
number of friends she does not have supportive discussions with[4]	1,60	2,25	.23**	.20**	.09
number of friends she has supportive discussions about children with[3]	2,58	2,85	.02	.09	-.08
number of friends she does not have supportive discussions about children with[4]	2,32	2,86	.24**	.19*	.12

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

1 = often or sometimes 2 = seldom or never
3 = above the mean 4 = below the mean

TABLE 3

Correlations (Pearson's r) between the number of mother's friends she spends leisure time with and the number of child's peer relationships with non-classmates for the mother-daughter and the mother-son dyads

	N	r
mother-daughter dyad	51	.44*
mother-son dyad	62	-.00

* $p < 0.01$

TABLE 4

Multiple Regression of the number of child's peer relationships with non-classmates outside the classroom on the number of mother's friends she spends leisure time with, sex of the child, and interaction term

		number of non-classmates
	B	Beta
(1) number of mother's friends she spends leisure time with	.00	-.00
(2) sex of the child (girl = 1, boy = 0)	-1.13	-.19
(3) Interaction (1) x (2)	.33(•)	.37
R square	.09	
F	3.68*	
N	113	

* $p < 0.05$ (•) $p < 0.10$

TABLE 5

Correlations (Pearsons'r) between the number of mother's friends she spends leisure time with and the number of boy's and girl's peer relationships with non-classmates for full time employed and not fulltime employed mothers

	all children	boys	girls
full time employed mothers	(r = .01) N = 36	r = -.42* N = 23	r = .40(•) N = 13
part time and not-employed mothers	r = .50** N = 72	r = .44** N = 36	r = .51** N = 36

(•) $p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

TABLE 6

Multiple regression of the number of boy's peer relationships with non-classmates' on the number of mother's friends she spends leisure time with, mother's employment status, and interaction term

	number of peer relationships with non-classmates	
	B	Beta
(1) number of mother's friends she spends leisure time with	-.78**	-.73
(2) mother's employment status[1]	-4.90**	-.86
(3) Interaction (1) x (2)	1.07**	1.08
R square	.27	
F	6.78**	
N	59	

1 full time employed = 0, part time employed = 1 ** $p < 0.01$

TABLE 7

Correlations between the number of fathers' friendships with different characteristics and the number of child's peer relationships (Pearson's r) for 78 father-child dyads

Father	x	s	Child total number of peers	Child number of non-classmates	Child number of classmates
total number of friends	3,74	3,63	.14	.18(•)	-.01
number of friends he spends leisure time with[1]	2,51	2,69	.24*	.26*	.03
number of friends he does not spend leisure time with[2]	1,23	1,78	-.08	-.03	-.08
number of friends he has supportive discussions with[3]	1,72	2,42	.25*	.11	.22*
number of friends he does not have supportive discussions with[4]	2,03	3,08	-.04	.12	-.19*
number of friends he has supportive discussions about children with[3]	1,83	2,17	.10	.15(•)	-.03
number of friends he does not have supportive discussions about children with[4]	1,91	2,46	.08	.12	-.02

(•) $p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$
1 = often or sometimes 2 = seldom or never
3 = above the mean 4 = below the mean

TABLE 8

Correlations (Pearson's r) between the number of father's friends he spends leisure time with and the number of child's peer relationships with non-classmates for the father-daughter and the father-son dyads

	N	r
father-daughter dyad	33	.32*
father-son dyad	45	.22 (*)

(*) $p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$

Parental Social Network and Child's Friendship Network

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyze the relation between the friendship networks of parents and the peer networks of their children (cf. Ladd, 1991). On the side of parents we divide the entire friendship networks of fathers and mothers into subnetworks of friends with which they spend leisure time and with which they do not spend leisure time. On the side of children we divide the network into subnetworks of classmates and non-classmates.

Subjects were 255 children from grade 2 to 5 of an inner-city primary school in the western part of Berlin, Germany. The interview about friends was conducted individually at school, but outside the classroom. In addition, mothers and fathers of a subsample of 116 children were interviewed separately at home about their social networks (N=103 mothers, N=68 fathers).

The number of mothers' and fathers' leisure-time friends was positively related to the number of their children's peer relationships with non-classmates, but not with classmates. In the case of fathers, the relation was similar for sons and daughters. In the case of mothers, the relation depends on their employment status. For mothers who were not full time employed, the number of leisure-time friends was positively related to their sons' and daughters' peer relationships with non-classmates as it was for fathers. In contrast, the number of leisure-time friends of full time employed mothers correlated positively with the number of peer relationships of girls, but negatively with the number of peer relationships of boys. The influence of maternal employment on their children's peer networks seems to be different for boys and girls.

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